

Foster Care Adoption Campaign: You Don't Have to Be Perfect to be a Perfect Parent

Idaho has joined the rest of the nation in launching an adoption campaign to highlight the urgent need for families to provide loving, permanent homes for children and teens currently in foster care. The campaign offers new, light-hearted public service announcements that illustrate some of the ordinary situations parents experience with their children, reinforcing the notion that these everyday moments in family life are what really matter. The message: "You don't have to be perfect to be a perfect parent. There are thousands of kids in foster care that would love to put up with you."



Currently, 518,000 children are in the U.S. foster care system and 118,000 of these children are waiting for families to adopt them. The majority of waiting children belong to racial minority groups. About 19,000 young adults age out of the foster care system each year without ever being adopted. As of June 30, 2006, in Idaho 269 children were waiting in foster care for a family to call their own.

"The need to recruit and retain foster and adoptive families in Idaho is critical, especially for older children, sibling groups, and those with emotional and behavioral issues," says Lori Yellen, program specialist in the Division of Family and Community Services.

Between 2002 and 2006, the number of Idaho children living in foster care increased 48 percent. In 2002, 2,260 children and teens were placed in foster care during the state fiscal year; that number increased to 3,335 in 2006.

"The goal of the Department of Health and Welfare is to find a family who can best meet an individual child's needs within 24 months of the child or teen entering foster care," Yellen says. "It's critical to provide adoption services for those children whose parent's rights have been terminated by the court."

The campaign directs audiences to visit www.adoptuskids.org or www.adopte1.org (for information in Spanish) for important, accurate information about the foster care system and the adoption process. Prospective parents can also call the Idaho CareLine at 2-1-1 or 1-800-926-2588 or visit www.idahocareline.org.

To view the campaign advertisements prepared by the Ad Council, go to www.adoptuskids.org/answeringTheCall.aspx.

Story by Mary Ann Reuter